

## Selden Creek Opens on Earth Day 25

**T**he Nature Conservancy Connecticut Chapter officially opened its new Selden Creek property in Lyme on April 22, the 25th anniversary of Earth Day.

This 207-acre addition, which fronts one of the most important tidal wetlands of the lower Connecticut River and provides a buffer area for roosting bald eagles, almost triples the size of the preserve. It is a key site in the chapter's Tidelands of the Connecticut River program, which focuses on the region's tidal marshes.

Last September, the chapter signed an option with Ferdinand W. Coudert of Lyme for the purchase of the land. Coudert agreed to sell the property for \$1.03 million, a price significantly below its fair market value.

The chapter has set a \$1.3 million fund-raising goal for the preserve, the largest for an individual preserve in the chapter's history. Although the chapter raised sufficient funds to close on the property in February, it is continuing to seek donations to create a permanent stewardship endowment to care for the preserve, as well as to repay loans for the purchase and closing costs.

Last fall the chapter also announced that the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation of Meriden had provided a \$500,000 challenge grant toward the purchase of the property. The first major gift to meet this challenge was a \$250,000 grant from the John & Kelly Hartman Foundation.

In December, the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) obtained approval from the state Bond Commission to provide \$250,000 toward the Selden Creek addition, which is adjacent to 600-acre Selden Island State Park. This funding comes from the

state Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Fund. The state will receive a conservation and recreation easement providing trail access to the property.

"The completion of this 207-acre partnership purchase is an important milestone for the conservation and acquisition efforts of both the Conservancy and DEP," said DEP Commissioner Sidney J. Holbrook. "The DEP seeks opportunities to maximize its resources by developing partnerships for land acquisition, public access, conservation and preservation. The addition of this parcel on the Connecticut River, with its scenic views, wetland habitats, and potential upland and shoreline access points, will enhance public awareness and exposure to the shoreline."

One of the most biologically significant sites on the lower Connecticut River, this preserve takes the name of the creek that divides it from Selden Island State Park. Its 207 acres provide an important ecological buffer to the Selden Creek marshes. Protection of this large undeveloped tract will not only buffer the marshes from damage, but will ensure preservation of the solitude and quiet required by wintering



bald eagles.

"On behalf of The Nature Conservancy, I would like to thank Mr. Coudert, the Tremaine Foundation, and the DEP for making this possible," said Leslie N. Corey Jr., executive director of the Connecticut Chapter. "This is a great example of public and private individuals and organizations working together. With more support like this, we'll reach our goal." 🌿

— JOHN MATTHIESSEN

## FOR PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Four years ago, The Nature Conservancy announced a new program called the Last Great Places — an effort to save some of the most significant ecological systems in this hemisphere.

Last Great Places is the first large-scale attempt to put into practice the United Nation's "Man in the Biosphere" concept. Today, there are 40 Last Great Places, including one we're very proud of right here in Connecticut: the Tidelands of the Connecticut River.

The Last Great Places name carries an explanatory tag phrase: "An Alliance for People and the Environment." What does this mean?

I think it can best be illustrated by examples, and this issue of *From the Land* provides a good one: the opening of the Selden Creek Preserve in Lyme.

Quite often in this space, I write about places you won't be able to visit; there is simply no convenient way to get to some Conservancy properties. In the case of other preserves, we don't encourage visitors because the species that live on them are simply too delicate or shy, and an abundance of visitors would be destructive.

One of the reasons we're especially excited about the new addition to the Selden Creek Preserve is that public access to it is easily available. Visitors can hike, bird watch, or just relax and enjoy the tranquil natural surroundings. And, because the primary value of this property is as a buffer area to the delicate marshes of Selden Creek, responsible visitors are no threat to rare species.

This access makes The Nature Conservancy's job easier. We can talk and write about the beauty and value of nature until we're blue in the face and sore in the fingers, but it won't have a fraction of the persuasive power of five minutes in a quiet wood. A visit to a place like the Selden Creek Preserve strengthens the bond between people and their environment, fomenting a sense of responsibility toward it and a sense of belonging. If we see these places as our home and understand why they are of value, we will work with unity, energy, and innovation to protect them.

Selden Island and Selden Creek are also landmarks because of the unique coalition of groups and individuals that has worked together to protect this expanse of land, which now totals close to 1,000 acres.

As a private individual, Ferdinand Coudert has made a significant financial sacrifice by selling this property to the Conservancy at a bargain price. Numerous private donations, including a \$500,000 challenge grant from the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation of Meriden, made the acquisition possible.

In the public sector, many individuals at the state Department of Environmental Protection have worked to create Selden Island State Park, to maintain it, and most recently to help the Conservancy make this addition to our adjacent preserve. Through its Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program, the DEP is purchasing an easement on the property for \$250,000, which we will apply toward the \$1.03 million purchase price.

And back in the private sector, the Lyme Land Conservation Trust has protected 13.1 acres of adjacent land and has been very supportive of the Conservancy's work at this site.

Partnerships of this kind, including both groups and individuals, public and private, are a central theme of the Last Great Places concept. Without such coalitions, we will not be able to protect whole ecosystems. Together, we can protect these places as a legacy to pass on, intact and unspoiled, to future generations.



— LES COREY  
Vice President and  
Executive Director

## Volunteers and Chapter

The new 207-acre addition to the chapter's Selden Creek Preserve promises to be one of the nicest areas open to the public in the lower Connecticut River valley. Although a trail system exists on the property, certain trails have needed improvements, while others have overgrown to the point that they will be left alone to revert back to forest.

The main trail was officially opened on Earth Day, and we plan to clear existing loop trails by the end of summer. Volunteer Tom DeJohn of Eastford has made a preserve sign welcoming visitors, and the stewardship staff is preparing a bulletin board featuring a map of the area and preserve guidelines. Assistant Preserve Steward Marlene Kopcha will work with volunteers and has already assigned Jon Colson of Clinton as trail maintainer and Carol Kimball of Lyme, who is also the chapter's new planned giving officer, as preserve monitor (see page 8).

"The Conservancy is thrilled to add this premiere hiking area to its list of preserves," Kopcha said. "Without the assistance of our energetic and dedicated volunteers, active management of such a lovely tract would be impossible."

One main trail leads from Joshuatown Road to a beautiful overlook of Selden Creek and its adjacent freshwater tidal marshes. "To walk this area is to find yourself in the wilds of Connecticut," said Chapter Director Leslie N. Corey Jr. "It's exciting to know many future generations will experience this land in its wild and unspoiled condition."

Whether for watching migrating songbirds, admiring fall foliage, or cross country skiing, this preserve will offer something for everyone year round. 🌿

— DAVID GUMBART

## On the Cover:

Volunteers Tom DeJohn (left) and Carrie Tarca of Eastford erect the new sign at the Selden Creek Preserve on April 22, the 25th anniversary of Earth Day. DeJohn donated the hand-made preserve sign.

# Staff Prepare Selden Creek

photos: © John Matthiessen



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Top:  
On Earth Day, Chapter Director of Science and Stewardship Judy Preston leads a hike on the newly opened trails of the 207-acre Selden Creek Preserve in Lyme.

Bottom left:

Commissioner of Environmental Protection Sidney J. Holbrook (far right) celebrates Earth Day at the dedication of the Selden Creek Preserve, with Connecticut Chapter Chairman Anthony P. Grassi (far left) and William Koch, chairman of the Lyme Planning and Zoning Commission.

Bottom right:

State Representative Claire Sauer of Lyme presents the citation from the state General Assembly congratulating The Nature Conservancy on the dedication and opening of the Selden Creek Preserve to Chapter Director Leslie N. Corey Jr.

▼



## Chapter Trustee Donates 45 Acres to Beckley Bog

### *The Nature Conservancy At Work*

	Worldwide	Connecticut
Total Transactions:	16,246	650
Total Acres Protected:	7,625,000	20,509
Total Acres Registered:	455,000	6,117
Total Acres Saved:	8,080,000	26,625
Members:	793,038	17,699
Corporate Associates:	1,400	27

Chapter Trustee Jane Mali and the Grant Swamp Group of Norfolk in December donated a 45-acre addition to the chapter's Beckley Bog Preserve, bringing the size of the preserve to 655 acres. Mrs. Mali is the managing partner of the Grant Swamp Group.

The parcel is on the north side of Grantville Road, about a half mile west of the Winchester town line. The property has about a quarter mile of frontage on Grantville Road, from which it provides access to The Nature Conservancy's property to the north. The parcel, which has a 1,400-foot hill in the middle, is of particular importance because it will provide an upland buffer to Beckley Bog, one of the most significant natural areas in Connecticut.

"This is a generous and far-sighted donation by Jane and the Grant Swamp Group," said Chapter Director Leslie N. Corey Jr. "Anyone who cares about conservation in Connecticut should be very grateful to them."

Beckley Bog was the first land saving project undertaken by the Connecticut Chapter in 1957, when the chapter purchased 200 acres there under the leadership of Drs. Richard H. Goodwin and William Niering, two outstanding wetland ecologists. The

preserve is also known as the Frederic C. Walcott Preserve, and was named for the late U.S. Senator from Norfolk, who had a distinguished career in conservation.

This generous donation from the Grant Swamp Group continues a long tradition of private conservation action on behalf of this notable natural area.

Beckley Bog is located in a narrow valley and is bisected by Beckley Pond Brook, which flows from north to south through the length of the valley, eventually feeding into Grant Swamp in Winchester.

At the northern end of the area, the brook traverses marsh vegetation, then through bog vegetation before it enters the seven-acre Beckley Pond. The bog of the preserve's name is a roughly 1,500 square yard, three foot thick floating mat made of sphagnum moss and peat. The mat is inhabited by rare orchids and insect-eating plants adapted to the acidic, nutrient-poor conditions.

Beckley Bog is home to five plants listed as endangered in the state, a bird species of special concern in the state, and five rare moths and dragonflies. The new parcel contains a variety of interesting trees and ferns.

The Conservancy is working to raise \$8,400 to cover closing costs and create a stewardship endowment for the preserve.

— JOHN MATTHIESSEN

Beckley Bog Preserve,  
Norfolk.



## Two-Acre Purchase Establishes New Preserve in East Haddam

**T**he chapter purchased two acres on Cove Road in East Haddam in December, creating the new Salmon Cove Preserve and protecting the area from further development.

The chapter purchased one 0.27 acre parcel and one 1.73 parcel on the cove side and the inland side, respectively, of the secluded residential dead-end road. The new preserve is approximately a mile and a half up the Salmon River from the state boat launch on Route 149, where the Salmon River meets the Connecticut River.

The chapter made the purchase from Benjamin W. and Kelly Navarro of New York City for \$70,000, well below the fair market value of the property. The Nature Conservancy is now working to raise \$100,000 to cover the cost of the land, as well as closing costs, and to create an endowment to care for the preserve.

"We are very excited to establish a presence at Salmon Cove with this new preserve," said Land Protection Specialist Lesley Olsen. "We appreciate Ben and Kelly's cooperation, and their generous agreement to make a bargain sale of this land."

The smaller of the two parcels has 320 feet of frontage on Salmon Cove, an area that reveals expansive mud flats when the tide is low. The larger, which rises steeply away from the road and is forested with mixed hardwoods, is a buildable lot, with 314 feet of frontage on Cove Road. There is a small ravine on the east side of the property with a stream running down to the cove through a culvert under the road.

A small cottage on the larger lot and a garage on the smaller lot were demolished and removed by Pinebrook Construction of East



© Harold E. Maide

inhabit the area, as well as four significant plant species: two listed as endangered and two of special concern in the state. Atlantic salmon and rainbow smelt have been identified in the area, as have several other significant fish species.

This acquisition is of particular significance to The Nature Conservancy because Salmon Cove includes some of the important wetlands in the Tidelands of the Connecticut River. 🌿

— JOHN MATTHIESSEN

▲  
The Salmon River.

Haddam  
before the closing.

Salmon Cove is important as a winter roost and perch site for the federally threatened bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). Two species of invertebrates that are of special concern in Connecticut


## Lord Cove Preserve Grows to 303 Acres with 18-acre Easement

Continuing their long tradition of generosity to The Nature Conservancy, Endicott P. and Jane I. Davison of Lyme donated a conservation easement on 18 acres at the north end of Lord Cove in Lyme to the Connecticut Chapter in December.

This donation brings the Lord Cove Preserve to a total 303 acres (84 in easements), all protected through gifts. The last addition to the preserve was a 31-acre conservation easement from the Davisons in 1993. The state owns 363 acres at Lord Cove and the Old Lyme Conservation Trust owns 64 acres.

The Davison's new easement donation is a wooded parcel with mixed hardwood and coniferous trees sloping down to tidal marsh. It has 1,300 feet of frontage along Deep Creek.

Lord Cove is an excellent example of brackish tidal marsh land. Many bird species roost and perch within the marsh and surrounding uplands, including species that are endangered in Connecticut, such as the northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) and sedge wren (*Cistothorus platensis*); species that are threatened in Connecticut, such as the king rail (*Rallus elegans*) and the least bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*), the federally threatened bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), and the savannah sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*), a species of special concern in Connecticut.

Lord Cove also includes the habitat of ten plant species listed as endangered, threatened, or of special concern in Connecticut, many found at multiple locations throughout the marsh. 

— JOHN MATTHIESSEN



Lord Cove, Lyme. 



## TIDELANDS OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER

© Tom Beers



### Ragged Rock Creek Preserve Grows by 67 Acres

**T**wo sisters donated five separate tracts to the Connecticut Chapter's Ragged Rock Preserve in Old Saybrook in December, adding 67.5 acres to the salt marsh preserve.

Brenda W. Sullivan of Essex and Holley W. Carlisle of Greenwich made the donation of five tracts of varying sizes, bringing the total acreage of the Conservancy's Ragged Rock Preserve to 73.4 acres. They were encouraged to make the donation by Brenda Sullivan's daughter, Lisa Sullivan, who earned a biology degree from Connecticut College in 1993.

"This is a wonderfully generous donation on the part of Ms. Sullivan and Ms. Carlisle," said Connecticut Chapter Director Leslie N. Corey Jr. "The Ragged Rock Creek marsh is a key area, right at the mouth of the Connecticut River, and we are thrilled to have been able to multiply the size of the protected area."

Ragged Rock Creek and the surrounding 300-acre salt marsh are home to a wide variety of migratory shorebirds. It is frequented by black rail and king rail — threatened birds in Connecticut — and osprey, a species of special concern in the state. Three plant species of special concern are also found in the area.


The marsh is on the Connecticut River to the north of

North Cove, and is bounded to the northwest by the railroad tracks. In the center of the marsh is "Ragged Rock," a granite dome that is the only high point of the marsh.

The largest of the new tracts includes frontage on both Ragged Rock Creek and North Cove, and is adjacent to the Conservancy's existing 5.9-acre property there. The state of Connecticut also owns 207 acres in the area.

In 1989, through a combined gift of partial interest and sale of remaining interest by Dr. Robert Saunders and Charlotte Saunders, the chapter protected 5.9 acres of the marsh. The five new tracts are 32 acres, 25 acres, 6.7 acres, 3 acres, and 0.8 of an acre. These tracts were formerly owned by Gifford Warner of Old Saybrook, who passed away in August 1993 and left the properties to his two daughters.

Warner originally acquired the marshland in 1964 with the intention of developing a marina. Over the years he altered his plans, and in 1989 he registered the property with the Conservancy — a non-binding agreement recognizing the environmental significance of the property — and voluntarily agreed to preserve the marsh.

The Nature Conservancy is now working to raise \$7,000 to cover closing costs and to create an endowment to care for the preserve. 

— JOHN MATTHIESSEN

## Tidelands Partner Profile The University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System

*James Gibbons (left) and  
Chester L. Arnold Jr. of the  
UConn Cooperative  
Extension System.*

**T**he Connecticut Chapter has come to rely on many partners in its Tidelands of the Connecticut River Program, none more than the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System. The experience and knowledge of the Extension System's professionals and the services they provide have

enabled the chapter to undertake projects of an ambition and scope that would otherwise not be possible.

The Extension System has played a vital role in bringing land use planning information to Tidelands towns through the Environmental Protection Agency-funded Chester Creek project last year and on the current EPA-funded Eightmile River project, both partnership projects with the Connecticut Chapter.

Chester Arnold is an Extension faculty member in water resources and co-director of the Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) Project. This is a very successful and thought-provoking program bringing information about polluted runoff in specific watersheds to municipal decision makers to help them with local planning. The project uses the geographic information system (GIS) computerized mapping technology.

C. James Gibbons is an Extension Educator in natural resources and land use planning as well as co-director of the NEMO project. He has worked with state, regional and municipal officials and landowners in Middlesex County in land use and natural resources planning for more than 15 years.

Stephen Broderick is an extension forester with 15 years experience working with owners of non-industrial, private forested tracts. He is also the director of the Connecticut Coverts Project, a volunteer training program for woodland management. (In this sense, "covert" — pronounced KUH-vert — refers to natural cover, or hiding places, for woodland wildlife.)

Roy Jeffrey is an Extension Educator with many years of experience in water quality related issues.

The Extension System assists communities with land use planning, farming techniques, water quality issues, helping young people develop leadership skills, and more. Faculty, staff and trained volunteers provide research-based information to individuals and local communities through educational programs, workshops and publications. ➤



© Juliana Barrett

## Foundation Support for Tidelands

**I**mplementing the Tidelands of the Connecticut River program is an enormous task. Support from charitable foundations is essential, and the Connecticut Chapter is fortunate to have recently received several grants to this project.

The Tortuga Foundation, based in New York City, granted \$25,000 in November 1994. This foundation was supporting the Tidelands program even in its planning stages. It has also supported other Nature Conservancy projects both in Connecticut and internationally.

Like the Tortuga Foundation, the Newman's Own Foundation made a gift to the Tidelands program in general. In December 1994 the chapter received \$25,000 from the Westport-based foundation, which has aided Tidelands and other Conservancy projects in Connecticut. Since founding

Newman's Own in 1982, Paul Newman has donated more than \$56 million, 100 percent of his after-tax profit from Newman's Own, to a wide variety of educational and charitable causes.

From Minneapolis, Minn. came a gift from the Carolyn Foundation, which supports environmental and other causes across the country, focusing on specific projects. Their December 1994 gift of \$30,000 will help with Tidelands research and outreach programs. There is always more to learn about water quality or the habits of certain species; the grant from the Carolyn Foundation will support such research.

All three of these foundations have recognized the importance of the Tidelands of the Connecticut River. Their gifts will help ensure the preservation of this unique ecological system. ➤

—JESSICA HOLDEN

—JULIANA BARRETT



## EPA Funds Eightmile River Study

The Environmental Protection Agency has provided a second year of funding for the Tidelands program's study of Connecticut River tributaries and their watersheds.


EPA funded the program's pilot Chester Creek study, "Critical Habitat Evaluation through Technology" (CHETT) in 1993 and 1994. This year's study will follow the same methodology, while focussing on the watershed of the Eightmile River, which runs through the towns of Salem, East Haddam, and Lyme, where it meets the Connecticut River at Hamburg Cove. The river takes its name not from its length, but from the approximate distance of its mouth from the mouth of the Connecticut River.

The Conservancy is working on this project in partnership with the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension Service, and EnviroGraphics, a Geographic Information System (GIS; *see side bar*) consulting firm. Like the CHETT project, this one will involve sharing and discussing the results of the study with local officials, groups, and individuals.

Both the Chester Creek and the Eightmile River projects have developed

from the Extension Service's Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program's "Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials" (NEMO) project. This very successful project is using GIS images to educate municipal officials about the relationship between land use and water quality.

The 1994-95 project has two goals. The first is to analyze natural resource and management information through use of a GIS. The second is to provide the results of these analyses to area residents so natural resource protection information can be incorporated into municipal and individual decisions.

Some data for these analyses have already been provided to EnviroGraphics by the GIS Group of the state Department of Environmental Protection's Natural Resources Center and by the Midstate Regional Planning Agency. This information will form the basis for a series of educational programs and informational presentations by Cooperative Extension Service natural resource experts and Conservancy staff. 

— JULIANA BARRETT

### GIS: More Than Mapping

The Geographic Information System, or GIS, is an emerging computer technology that, in its simplest form, links graphic data — a map of any given geographic location — with non-graphic attributes. The graphic data consists of spatial information such as topography, roads, rivers and wetlands, forest stands, or property lines and other boundaries. Non-graphic, textual data describes characteristics of the graphic features and might include elevation, soils types, water quality, bird populations, recreational use, and demographic information.

One of the most valuable aspects of GIS is the user's ability to produce a computerized, two-dimensional map that displays a specific combination of graphic and non-graphic features for a particular site. These features can be manipulated in a variety of ways, allowing the user to analyze the data and thus make more effective decisions about managing the area's resources.

GIS-based investigations begin with a needs assessment of a geographically defined area. Researchers may wish, for example, to determine the number, age, and species of trees in a second-growth forest; conditions required to introduce desired new tree species; the soil type, elevation and slope preferred by each species; the effect of weather patterns; and the flora and fauna associated with existing and proposed trees. Once these criteria are established, the required information is collected and entered into a database, together with the appropriate maps, aerial photos, or satellite imagery.

Each type of information collected is referred to as a "theme," and each theme is stored in a single "layer" within the database. Certain themes, such as tree species and waterways, can be color coded to facilitate identification. It is useful to think of the GIS as analogous to transparent maps that can be accurately stacked upon one another.

(CONT. ON NEXT PAGE)

*The Eightmile River.*




## Survey Shows Support for Tidelands Program

### GIS: More Than Mapping

(CONT. FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

Our second-growth forest example will begin with a topographic map within specific boundaries. Additional layers of information, or themes, can be superimposed on this map in various combinations and sequences for visual analysis. Displayed on the computer monitor, this map layering technique allows the researcher to evaluate the relationship between themes by viewing them individually or simultaneously.

A GIS user might learn that pitch pines thrive in the poor soils that exist at the higher elevations of a property, and that the pitch pine is the only habitat capable of supporting certain species of moths and butterflies. The analysis might indicate that the majority of trees in this woodland are of similar age and size, creating a dense canopy that blocks sunlight needed by the understory species that would provide habitat for small mammals. Weather patterns may indicate that portions of the property are subject to exceedingly high winds, which accounts for the high rate of downed trees in those areas and limits the type of vegetation that can be introduced there.

This information, together with the additional data we've layered in the GIS, provides valuable insight for making sound management decisions about this land and its resources. 

— ANN COLSON



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Program Director

**H**ow do people who live near the important tidal marshes of the lower Connecticut River feel about them? How much do they know about them?

The Nature Conservancy has always sought answers through scientific research. To answer these and other questions, the Connecticut Chapter turned to social science, and The Center for Research and Public Policy in New Haven. Combining our knowledge of threats to the tidal marshes and information researchers gleaned from focus groups, the Center developed a telephone survey and called more than 500 randomly-selected area residents last fall.

The results of the survey give the chapter a clear direction for outreach projects. Just as important, the numbers show significant support for the concept of preserving the tidal marshes: 80 percent of those surveyed supported the concept of the Tidelands program. (Data in the report is statistically accurate to plus or minus 4.5 percent at a 95 percent confidence level.)

Major reasons for this support include concern about the birds and other wildlife in the marshes (99 percent), the concept that the marshes should be preserved for future generations to enjoy (94 percent), and the belief that people and the environment can co-exist (94 percent).


Many of those surveyed said they would take action to preserve the marshes: 62 percent of those surveyed would attend a lecture or a field trip to learn more about the tidal marshes; 54 percent would join a conservation organization working to protect the marshes; and 36 percent would consider serving on a local land use board like wetlands or planning & zoning. Most importantly, 93 percent said they would consciously change their actions if they discovered that something they were doing was bad for the marshes.

Although these positive results do not guarantee that people will actually act on their sentiments, they show that people value the region's natural resources, and are very receptive to efforts to protect the marshes.

"This survey shows a positive attitude toward our goals and priorities that is very encouraging," said Dr. Juliana Barrett, Geoffrey C. Hughes Tidelands Program Director. "Although we have a lot of work ahead of us, it's great to know that people support what we're doing."

Residents of the area are aware of many aspects of the marsh system: 85 percent are aware that there are tidal marshes along the Connecticut River, and 64 percent are aware of the concept of "biodiversity." Bald eagles are familiar to 74 percent of those surveyed; 60 percent are aware that osprey are found in the area.

In addition to all this good news, the research also highlights areas where education is needed: 54 percent of area residents are not aware that mute swans are a threat to the marshes because of their aggressive behavior toward other birds and their habit of pulling up marsh plants by their roots. And 46 percent are not aware that invasive plants threaten the biological diversity of the marshes by crowding out other plants. In addition, 93 percent are not aware that the Puritan tiger beetle (*Cicindela puritana*) — the rarest species in Connecticut — is found in the Tidelands area.

With research information in hand, the chapter can fine tune an outreach program to inform area residents about the things they can do to help preserve biodiversity in the tidal marshes. And five years from now (when a follow-up study is done), we'll see if our efforts have made a difference. 

— LESLIE STARR

## It's time to visit. . . Ayers Gap, Franklin

The best kept secret in eastern Connecticut

**D**riving by the Ayers Gap Preserve on Route 207 in Franklin, you won't see much that identifies this site as a nature preserve; a bold outcrop of rock comes right up to the road, and disappears back into an abrupt hillside. What lies beyond, however, is — like many hideaways in the northeast hills — a real treasure of natural history.

Ayers Gap is a rugged place: 80 acres of protected land that conceals an exquisite, cascading waterfall amidst crags of exposed rock outcrops. For all its dramatic topography, a loop trail brings the visitor well into the preserve and provides easy access to the sights to be enjoyed there. There are flowing brooks, waterfalls, stately hemlocks, and the cool, moist aroma of the preserve's interior gorge, also known as Bailey's Ravine.

In the gorge, Bailey Brook winds its way across and below slabs of the metamorphic rock Scotland Schist. This rock is dark gray with abundant glints of mica — beautiful in its own right, particularly as a backdrop to hemlock and yellow birch.

The relationship between water and rock at this site goes back between 14,000 and 20,000 years, when glaciers were melting their way out of the state. Ancient glacial potholes can today be found at Ayers Gap as evidence of the power and abundance of glacial meltwater. Potholes are formed by the flow of large volumes of water in circular currents called eddies, which spin like the air in a tornado. With the aid of sand that abrades rock at the base of an eddy, the water hollows out curious round holes in solid rock. To come across these features of the landscape today stimulates one's imagination.

The cliffs that overhang Bailey Brook harbor yet another natural wonder: a delicate fern that is known to exist in only five other locations across Connecticut. This lovely plant has found a refuge in the cool, moist recesses of the rock outcrops. Above the ravine, the blazed trail moves along the spine of a ridge, affording a terrific view east across the Franklin countryside.

If there's a discouraging word to be heard at this site, it's that Ayers Gap is a trash magnet; a small handful of individuals have recklessly disregarded its natural heritage.

While the majority of the preserve is clear of debris, litter trouble spots continue to mar its beauty. Thankfully, volunteers, including the preserve monitor Jim Handfield of Franklin and local 4-H Clover kids, as well as helpful town and state officials, have picked up after these thoughtless visitors.

Pick a particularly hot, muggy Connecticut summer day and allow Bailey's ravine to pull you into its dark, cool recesses. It's well worth the venture. 🌿

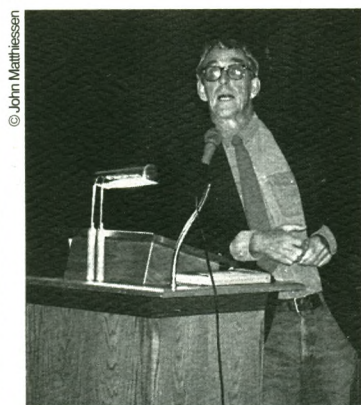
— JUDY PRESTON



▲  
Ayers Gap, Franklin.

## Biological Pollution

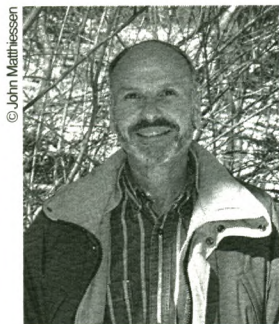
### Invasive Plants and Animals Threaten Rare Species



#### *Heart of the Land*

Author Peter Matthiessen spoke at a fund raising event for The Nature Conservancy Connecticut Chapter on Wednesday, March 8 at Greenwich Country Day School. Approximately 100 people attended the event.

Matthiessen, the author of more than 20 books, read from an essay he contributed to The Nature Conservancy's anthology of writings titled *Heart of the Land*. The book includes essays by 30 writers on the Last Great Places, the ecosystems across the hemisphere on which the Conservancy is focusing its conservation work. If you are interested in a copy of *Heart of the Land*, please contact your local book store, or call Pantheon Books at 1-800-726-0600.



▲ Bill Williams

When The Nature Conservancy buys land, removing the threat of development on it, does this guarantee the permanent existence of the rare species on that land? Maybe not.

One recently recognized threat to biological diversity and the integrity of ecological systems is invasive, non-native plants and animals. Since the arrival of Europeans in North America, the delicate balance of the North American ecosystem has been permanently disrupted by the introduction of non-native species. As human travel increases in frequency, scale and scope, this exchange will only accelerate, bringing many foreign plants and animals to this continent.

These species arrive here in a variety of ways. Some are intentionally released for agricultural, horticultural or other reasons, before anyone realizes how quickly they can spread. Purple loosestrife, one of Connecticut's most troublesome invasive plants (see *Winter 1995 From the Land*) is an example of a horticultural import that is out of control

throughout much of North America's wetlands. Other species are released unintentionally: the gypsy moth was originally imported for research and accidentally released, while the zebra mussel travelled to North America in the ballast of ships.

The resulting damage can be wide-ranging. Some rare native plants, animals, and communities may be overgrown by invasive species. And unlike poisonous chemical pollutants, biological pollution from these invasive species can grow and reproduce.

Historically, managers of natural lands have had a "hands-off" approach, letting nature take its course and allowing for the survival of the fittest. However, many of these invasive species, introduced by humans, have advantages over native species: they may have no predators or diseases in their adopted land. It is therefore imperative that land managers become aware of potentially threatening invasive species and deal with them if rare native species are to survive. 🌿

— BETH LAPIN

#### V O L U N T E E R P R O F I L E

Staunton "Bill" Williams Jr. has been a Conservancy member for more than five years. He is now a full-time volunteer for The Nature Conservancy, spending four days a week at the Connecticut Field Office and one day at the Lower Hudson Chapter in Mt. Kisco, N.Y. At the Connecticut Chapter, Bill is diligently assessing water quality in the Tidelands of the Connecticut River region.

Bill's background is diverse. He holds an undergraduate degree in Economics from Yale, a Masters of Business Administration from Columbia, and a Masters in Environmental Studies with a concentration in industrial management from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. After serving in the Navy, Bill worked in finance at various industrial companies, including 17 years at Combustion Engineering, Inc. of Stamford.

Upon leaving Combustion Engineering, Bill sought expansion of his interest in environmental issues and enrolled in the masters program at Yale. "I have always

been interested in environmental matters and decided to turn an environmental avocation into a vocation," says Bill. After receiving his Masters in Environmental Science degree, Bill worked for a consulting firm on water resource and environmental compliance issues.

Last year, Bill contacted Chapter Director Leslie N. Corey Jr. and Dr. Juliana Barrett, Geoffrey C. Hughes Director of the Tidelands program, offering to do pro bono work for Tidelands. Since then, we have been the beneficiaries of his excellent efforts.

Bill's secondary concentration was hydrology, and we are happy to have his expertise to assist in analyzing the water quality issues facing the Connecticut River. "I am looking at the data that has been gathered by other groups, evaluating water quality issues, assessing threats and how species in the Tidelands may be impacted," Bill said.

Thanks, Bill, for your outstanding work! 🌿

— DOROTHY MILLEN

## Trees Transplanted at Turtle Creek



Chapter volunteers and staff moved trees from Barkhamsted to the 95-acre Turtle Creek Preserve in Essex April 6 through 8, replacing about 100 hemlocks removed from Turtle Creek after they were infested by the hemlock woolly adelgid. The dead and dying hemlocks had become a threat to nearby homes. The Conservancy replaced them with white pines donated by Hartford's Metropolitan District Commission, which owns land on the Barkhamsted Reservoir. Left: Volunteers Jim and Carol Kasper of Hamden transplant a white pine tree.

## Eagles and Acorns

Top: Lorraine Donovan of Ivoryton (left) and Claude Davis of Haddam spot bald eagles on the Connecticut Chapter's fifth annual eagle watch on March 11. More than 160 Acorns, Charter Oak Council Members, staff and friends of the chapter spotted more than 15 of the majestic birds along the Connecticut River.

Bottom: Chapter staff members Xandy Wilson, Dot Millen (rear) and Carolie Evans (pointing) and a chapter member spot bald eagles.



photos: © Dorothy A. Millen



### Please Join Us!

- ☐ Yes, I'd like to become The Nature Conservancy's newest member in Connecticut.
- ☐ \$ 1,000 (Charter Oak Council)
- ☐ \$ 100 (Acorn)\*
- ☐ \$ 50
- ☐ \$ 25
- ☐ I'm already a member, but I'd like to be a charter member of the chapter's Charter Oak Council.
- ☐ I'm already a member, but would like to join the ranks of Connecticut Acorns.\*

Double your gift — send in your corporate matching gift form!

\* Acorns are Conservancy members who contribute at least \$100 annually to chapter operations. Connecticut Acorns are exempt from national membership dues notices, are invited on Acorn trips, and receive early notices for special events.

Please make checks payable to The Nature Conservancy and mail to 55 High Street, Middletown, CT 06457-3788.

Thank you.

NAME

ADDRESS

06NSPR595

For more information on...

...work parties, please call Marlene Kopcha or David Gumbart at (203) 344-0716. Some work parties are for a limited number of participants.

...Katharine Ordway or Devil's Den Preserves in Weston, please call (203) 226-4991.

...Sunny Valley Preserve in New Milford and Bridgewater, please call (203) 355-3716.

...Natural History Walks, please call Jean Cox at (203) 344-0716

### Trails Day

Sunny Valley Preserve, New Milford  
Two Hikes, Saturday, June 3:

#### 6 Miles, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Joan Tait, Sunny Valley Advisory Committee member, Bridgewater resident and long time Appalachian Mountain Club member, will lead a hike covering most of the preserve's trail system. Moderate slopes and speed, appropriate footwear recommended. Bring a lunch.

#### 3 Miles, 9:30 a.m. to noon

Leigh Wells, Bridgewater resident and member of the Housatonic Valley Chapter of the Sierra Club, will lead a hike over the southern half of the Bridgewater trail system. This hike will brake for bird sightings!

### Tree Identification Walk

Katharine Ordway Preserve, Weston  
Sunday, June 4, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Learn about the trees and magnificent flowering laurel in our woods.

Leader: Fred Moore

### Nature Photography with

Alison Wachstein, Devil's Den, Weston  
Monday, June 5, 8 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.  
First session in a three-part series for adults will take place in the photographer's home studio, where she will give a slide presentation and basic camera instruction on composition, lighting, and exposure in photographing nature. Limit: 20 participants. Beginners welcome. See also June 11 and 19.

### Natural History Walk

The Flowers of Haddam Meadows, Haddam  
Saturday, June 10, 10 a.m. to noon  
Limit: 12 participants

### Birding by Ear at Devil's Den, Weston

Saturday, June 10, 6:30 a.m. to 9 a.m.

Learn how to identify birds by their calls.

Leader: Dr. Lise Hanners

### Workday at the Katharine Ordway

Preserve, Saturday, June 10, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Help get the preserve ready for summer visitors.

### Nature Photography, part two

Devil's Den, Weston

Sunday, June 11, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

In part two of this series for adults, Alison Wachstein will answer questions as you take pictures. See also June 19.

### Laurel Walk

Devil's Den, Weston

Sunday, June 11, 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Learn about our state flower.

Leaders: June Myles and Penny Kemp

### Adult Walk

Katharine Ordway Preserve, Weston

Tuesday, June 13, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Our abundant laurel should be in full bloom.

Leaders: Mary Callahan and Helene Weatherill

### Saugatuck Valley Trails Day Hike

New Milford, Devil's Den, Weston

Saturday, June 17, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

10-mile hike along the reservoir trails with Bill Lyon from the Bridgeport Hydraulic Company and Paula and Bob Eppinger. Call the Den office to register and find out where to meet.

### Nature Photography, part three

Devil's Den, Weston

Monday, June 19, 8 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

For the last session of the series with Alison Wachstein, return to the artist's studio to display the photographs you took at the Den and discuss ways to improve them during a shared, informal, and positive critique.

### Family Nature Walk

Devil's Den, Weston

Saturday, June 24, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Leaders: Jackie and Dick Troxell

### Eco-Village Tent at Special Olympics

New Haven, July 2 through 8

Visit this special tent on Long Wharf in New Haven, with displays by The Nature Conservancy and other organizations. On 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 8th, hours are 2 p.m. to 11 p.m.; on 5th, 6th, and 7th, hours are 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.

### Insect Ecology

Devil's Den, Weston

Saturday, July 8, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Entomologist Henry Knizeski will teach you the basics of insect identification and talk about the biology of these abundant creatures.

### Adult Walk at Devil's Den

Monday, July 10, 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Leaders: Dorothy Abrams and Mary Callahan.

### Natural History Walk

Ragged Rock Preserve, Old Saybrook

Saturday, July 15, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Limit: 15 participants

### Fern Identification

Devil's Den, Weston

Saturday, July 15, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Identify and learn more about ferns.

Leader: Sue Roth

### Tree Identification

Sunny Valley Preserve, New Milford

Saturday, July 15, 9 a.m. to noon

Biologist Christine Balgooyen, naturalist for The Nature Conservancy in Maine, will identify common forest trees on a hike in the Housatonic River corridor.

### Sketching Nature

Sunny Valley Preserve, New Milford

Wednesday, July 19, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Science and Stewardship Director Judy Preston will lead as we provide simple pointers in rendering and recording in the field. Emphasis will be on drawing as a naturalists learning tool. No experience necessary! Bring a notepad, small sketch book or paper and clipboard, your favorite drawing tool and your lunch.

### Family Walk

Devil's Den, Weston

Saturday, July 22, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Enjoy an inviting stroll by streams and pond.

Leaders: Carey Couzelis and Paula and Bob Eppinger.

### Butterflies!

Katharine Ordway Preserve, Weston

Saturday, July 29, 10 a.m. to noon

Lepidopterist Vic Demasi will discuss identifying butterflies and moths and the habitats and foods that will attract them to your property.

### Thanks to Our Shade Trees

Devil's Den, Weston

Saturday, August 5, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Walk the Den and learn about our leafy friends.

Leaders: Mary Callahan and Gabor Osvath.

### Family Nature Walk

Devil's Den, Weston

Saturday, August 12, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Leaders: Jackie and Dick Trovell

### Natural History Walk

Pratt/Post Cove, Deep River

Saturday, August 19, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

You must bring your own canoe or kayak, as well as a life preserver for everyone in your party.

Limit: 15 boats

### Natural History Walk

Cathedral Pines, Cornwall

Saturday, September 9, 10 a.m. to noon

## Give Your Share(s) to Protect a Plover's Home!

© Clay Taylor



A gift of your appreciated stocks, bonds or mutual funds can help us save habitat for rare and endangered wildlife like the piping plover. Life Income gifts can allow you to increase your income, receive a charitable income tax deduction, avoid capital gains tax, and support The Nature Conservancy.

For more information please contact Carol Kimball, Planned Giving, at the Connecticut Chapter, (203) 344-0716, or return the form below.

### New Employee

Carol Kimball was hired as the chapter's first Planned Giving Officer in February. She is responsible for working with members of the Legacy Club — those who have made lasting commitments to the Conservancy through life income gifts, trusts, donations of real estate including Trade Lands, and bequests. As at home in her Poke Boat as in a pooled income fund, in her free time she loves exploring Tidelands marches and creeks.



© John Matthiesen

✂.....

- ☐ Please send me your "Ways of Giving" brochure so that I might consider tax-wise options for supporting the Conservancy.
- ☐ Please send me information about the Legacy Club and how to include The Nature Conservancy in my will.
- ☐ I (we) have remembered The Nature Conservancy in my (our) will or trust.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to: The Nature Conservancy, 55 High Street, Middletown, Conn. 06457-3788.

**The Nature Conservancy** 

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**From The Land** 

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## Land Trust Partners

**F**rom the gathering of scientific knowledge to the day-to-day management of natural areas, building partnerships is essential to The Nature Conservancy's work. The Connecticut Chapter and the Land Trust Service Bureau are reaching out to land trusts across the state to form a strong link with these wonderful organizations. Land trusts are crucial to the continued success of our preserve stewardship program.

In the past, the chapter has presented a variety of workshops at the yearly Land Trust Service Bureau Convocation as a way of nurturing our connection to land trusts and assisting them in their various activities. Starting this March, the chapter has begun expanding its outreach program by offering workshops on resolving stewardship issues, building and maintaining trail systems in preserves, and using a map and compass.

In certain cases, the Conservancy transfers preserves that do not contain rare animals, plants, or natural communities to local land trusts because local organizations are often more appropriate stewards of those lands. By strengthening our link with land trusts, we can be assured that

transferred preserves will receive the best possible management. That, after all, is the most important goal, once a wild area has been protected for future generations.

The Land Trust Service Bureau was established in 1980 by the Conservancy and the Conservation Law Foundation of New England to support Connecticut land trusts through technical assistance and other services. There are more than 110 trusts in Connecticut with approximately 23,000 members, and together they protect more than 26,000 acres of land. 

— MARLENE KOPCHA



**From The Land**   
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